

Bill C-53 at the INAN Committee

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ISSUE NO. 109, SPECIAL YEAR-END EDITION 2023

MÉTIS VOYAGEUR



2023 Year in Review



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THE MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

YEAR-END 2023 - NO. 109

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OR MOVING SOON?**

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SUBMISSION POLICY:

The Métis Nation of Ontario (MNO) encourages contributions from MNO citizens and staff. All submissions are edited to conform to the Canadian Press Style Guide as well as for grammar, repetitiveness, spelling and to accurately reflect the official names and titles of individuals, organizations, bodies and agencies referenced in submissions.

The MNO does not accept submissions including editorials and letters to the editor that make partisan political statements.

With the exception of letters to the editor and submissions to the family section, all submissions should NOT be written in the first person.

The recommended length for a submission is between 400 and 600 words. Submissions longer than that may be edited for length.



A Message from
MARGARET FROH
MNO President

A Message of Gratitude, Reflection, & Hope for the New Year

As we gather together this holiday season, I am filled with gratitude and pride for the Métis Nation of Ontario. This year, as every year, has been a journey marked by challenges and triumphs. But it is our enduring Métis spirit – resilient and strong – that will continue to see us through the years ahead.

Some highlights of this past year were the signing of the Métis Government Recognition and Self-Government Implementation Agreement in February and the progress made with Bill C-53, the federal legislation recognizing our Métis self-government. This significant legislation will open new avenues for our rights and be a milestone moment in our continuous march towards self-government.

While there have been obstacles along this path and challenges, we remain strong. We are Métis, and we are proud.

And, just as we have done for 200 years, we will endure.

I'd like to once again thank our communities who have mobilized in inspiring ways this year in support of Bill C-53 and our inherent rights. The outpouring of support for this legislation has been unprecedented and it is all thanks to you.

As we reflect on 2023, let's hold in our hearts those moments that brought us together and the challenges we have overcome. These experiences, joyous and difficult, weave us together like the threads of the Métis sash. 2023 marked the 30th anniversary of the MNO, and we should be incredibly proud of the work we have done to fulfill the dreams of our ancestors.

I extend a heartfelt thank you to each of you for your dedication, passion, and commitment to our Nation. Your contributions are what make our community vibrant and thriving.

Looking forward, let's carry the momentum of the past year into the next.

From my family to yours, I wish you a very Happy New Year. May it be filled with joy, peace, and the love of family and friends, as we celebrate the strides we've made and anticipate those yet to come.

Marsii

Margaret Froh
President, Métis Nation of Ontario

**Province-wide Plebiscite on next steps related to Registry Review
Your Vote, Your Voice, Your Rights**
More on pages 11-14

MÉTIS VOYAGEUR

Ottawa
Métis Youth Culture Camps are back in-person!

AGA RECAP
MNO and Canadian Geographic partner for feature story
RIVERS OF RESISTANCE

101

AGA

The Next Métis Voyageur submission deadline: February 1, 2023

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
More bright days ahead 2023
2023 is a significant year for the Métis Nation of Ontario, as we celebrate the anniversaries of two historic milestones

Métis Canoe Expedition is back!

MÉTIS YOUTH AND ADVENTURE AWARDS
30th / 20th

THE NEXT MÉTIS VOYAGEUR
YOU & YOURS OF THE SEASON

The next
MÉTIS VOYAGEUR
submission deadline:
January 31, 2024
Send your stories
and photos to:
CommOps@metisnation.org



Above:
This fall, witnesses appeared before Parliament's Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) advocating for the swift passage of Bill-C-53. Left to right: MNO Youth Council President Jordyn Playne, founding MNO President Tony Belcourt, Métis youth Hayden Stenlund, MNO President Margaret Froh and MNC President Cassidy Caron.

Our Federal Métis Self-Government Legislation

The passage of Bill C-53 remains a significant focus of our collective advocacy, pivotal to our reconciliation efforts with Canada.

Bill C-53, our Métis self-government federal recognition legislation, was introduced on June 21st by unanimous consent. That means that no Member of Parliament opposed its introduction. All parties supported it. It was deemed to have passed first and second reading and was referred over to committee for study.

The Bill affirms the self-government agreements Canada signed with three Métis governments – the Métis Nation of Ontario, the Métis Nation-Saskatchewan, and the Métis Nation of Alberta.

These self-government agreements recognize our Métis governments' jurisdiction and authority over internal governance matters, such as Métis citizenship, Métis elections, Métis governance structures, and Métis child and family services.

The MNO has met with parliamentarians from all parties on Bill C-53, and we have been doing everything in our power to get the bill over the finish line.

But, while the Bill has been in front of

committee, there have been some significant delays.

The delay in passing Bill C-53 is more than an administrative hurdle; it directly impacts the well-being of Métis communities and our citizens. It also delays our elders witnessing their life's work to see our people take our rightful place within Confederation and has subjected our youth to harassment.

This is unacceptable.

While our conversations with government are largely positive and supportive, there is unfortunately some strong opposition to this Bill coming from some vocal First Nations leaders that are complicating matters.

The outreach to the Ontario Chiefs has not been fruitful and has been met with deafening silence.

It is important to point out that it is not ALL First Nations speaking against Métis self-government -- and also that the things being said by some are certainly not the perspective of all First Nations people. Much of what is being said is quite upsetting, offensive and rife with misinformation.

Everyone who added their voices through written submissions to the committees – you

have helped us tremendously in breaking through to parliamentarians about what this bill means.

There is still more to do, and we will continue to persevere, because the Métis never back down from a challenge! So, we say, bring it on!

Our response to the challenges around Bill C-53 must be as united and forceful as ever.

We want to continue to flood parliamentarians with positive voices, speaking in support of Métis self-government once the committee work starts again at the end of January 2024, and we will be engaging with MNO citizens, in doing that work. So, stay tuned for more on how you'll be able to help.

Once the committee study is concluded, the House will have the chance to examine and potentially amend Bill C-53. "Third reading" is the House's final look at the Bill before it is sent to the Senate. This legislative process then repeats in the Senate before a Bill receives Royal Assent and becomes law.

Reconciliation is not just a matter of political expediency and box checking for the Government of Canada, it is a moral imperative that underpins the very fabric of our Nation. ∞

Learn more about **Bill C-53** at this informative website:



Watch video of some of the **witness testimony** at Committee:



See all the **submissions** to the INAN Committee on Bill C-53:



Above: Leaders and past leaders from the Métis Governments in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario speak before Parliament's Standing Committee on Indigenous and Northern Affairs (INAN) advocating for the swift passage of Bill-C-53.



Delegates paddle up the Ottawa River to the opening ceremonies of the MNO 30th Annual General Assembly.

Much to celebrate at the 30th MNO Annual Assembly

The MNO held its 30th Annual General Assembly (AGA) on August 17th to 20th in Ottawa. The AGA brought together hundreds of Métis citizens from across the province and marked a historic milestone for the MNO as a Métis government.

“Over the last 30 years, we have faced many challenges as a Métis government in a province that used to deny our very existence. By staying true to our Statement of Prime Purpose—and working together—we signed an agreement with Canada earlier this year that formally recognizes the MNO as a Métis government. Unquestionably, we have much to celebrate at this AGA!” said MNO President Margaret Froh.

In 1993, the MNO began with two staff and its head office was located in the attic of the former

MNO President’s home. It now has over 35 offices across Ontario, close to 450 staff, delivers programs and services to its citizens in the areas of employment, training, housing, economic development, health and many other sectors, and manages annual budgets of over \$130 million. The MNO has also negotiated agreements with other governments dealing with Métis harvesting rights, Crown consultation and reconciliation.

As a part of the MNO’s celebrations, former MNO Presidents Tony Belcourt (1993-2008) and Gary Lipinski (2008-2016) joined the AGA and shared their insights on just how far the MNO has come in only three decades. In addition, the 7th Annual Métis Youth Leadership Conference was held by the MNO Youth Council in advance of the AGA. ∞



Above: MNO’s current and past Presidents honoured Roddy Powley at the MNO AGA opening ceremonies on August 17. The sacrifices of the Powley family will never be forgotten! Marsii, Roddy!

More coverage and photos from the MNO AGA:



See all the Resolutions passed at the 30th AGA:

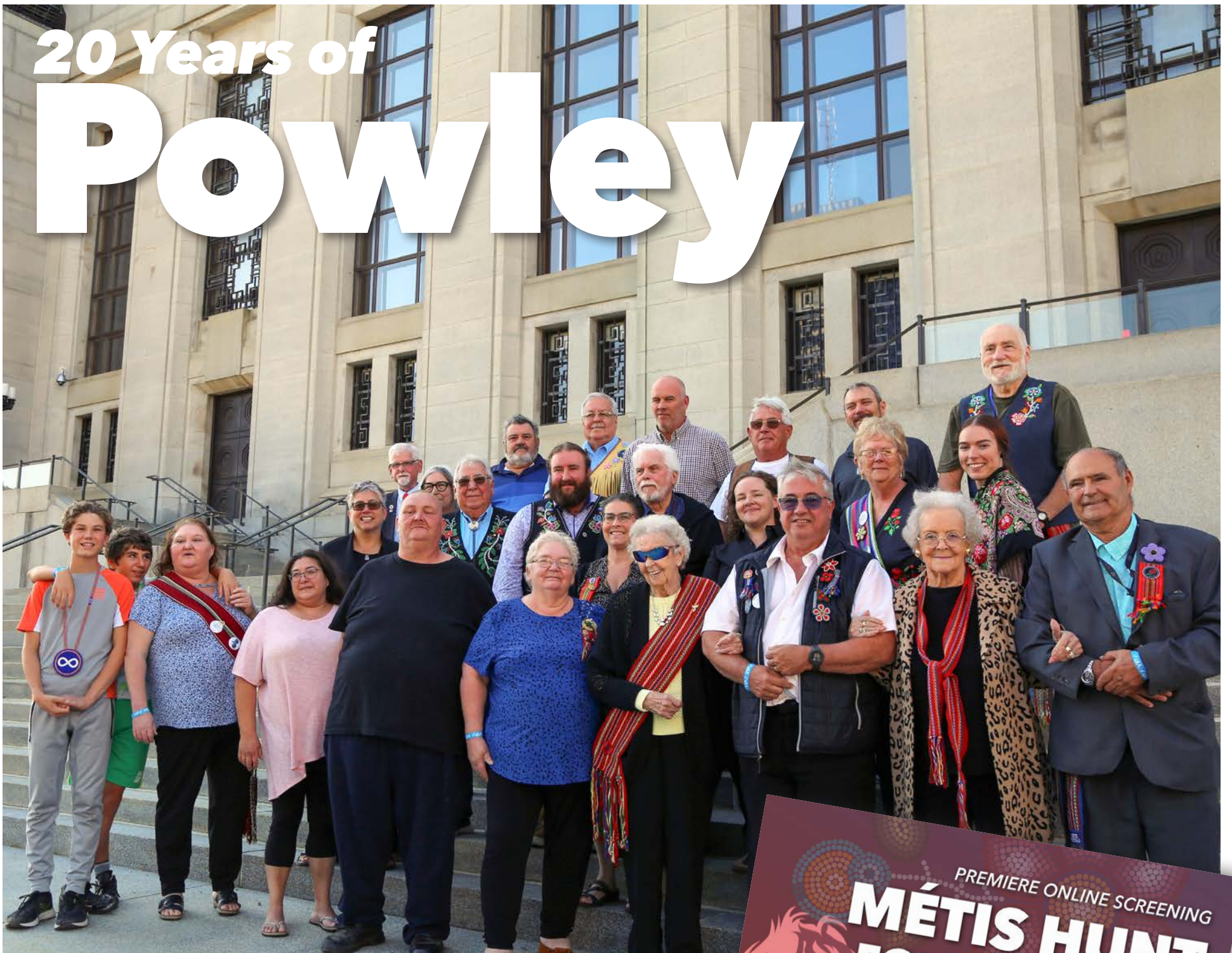


Congrats to Volunteer of the Year Anne-Marie Armstrong:



Watch the recorded Livestream of the 30th MNO AGA:





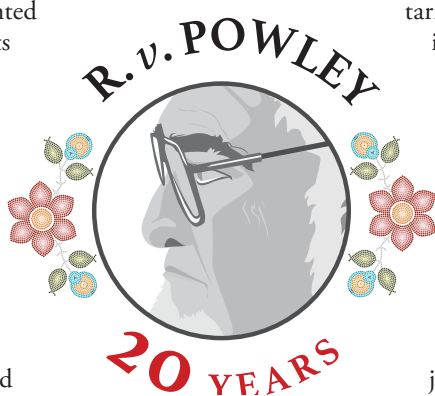
Above: Delegates to the MNO AGA, members of the PCMNO and the Powley family stand on the steps of the Supreme Court of Canada to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Court's unanimous decision in the history-making *R v. Powley*.

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the history-making Powley decision

September 19th, 2023, marked the 20th anniversary of the landmark Powley Decision, a pivotal moment in Canadian legal history. In 2003, the unanimous Supreme Court ruling in *R v. Powley* cemented a watershed victory for Métis rights recognition.

On September 16th the new documentary *Hunt for Justice: The Powley Story* was premiered in Sault Ste. Marie. A public online screening accessible via Facebook and YouTube, took place on Powley Day, September 19 (see the sidebar to watch the documentary now).

This powerful film by renowned Métis filmmaker Matt LeMay of Indigenous Geographic captures the 10-year legal battle that ultimately led to the groundbreaking 2003 decision. It all began when two MNO citizens – a father and son, Steve and Roddy Powley—faced charges for hunting a moose to feed their family near Sault Ste. Marie. With support from the MNO, the Powleys courageously defended themselves in court, ultimately propelling the case to the Supreme Court of Canada. The impacts of the Court's decision continue to resonate today for Métis people.

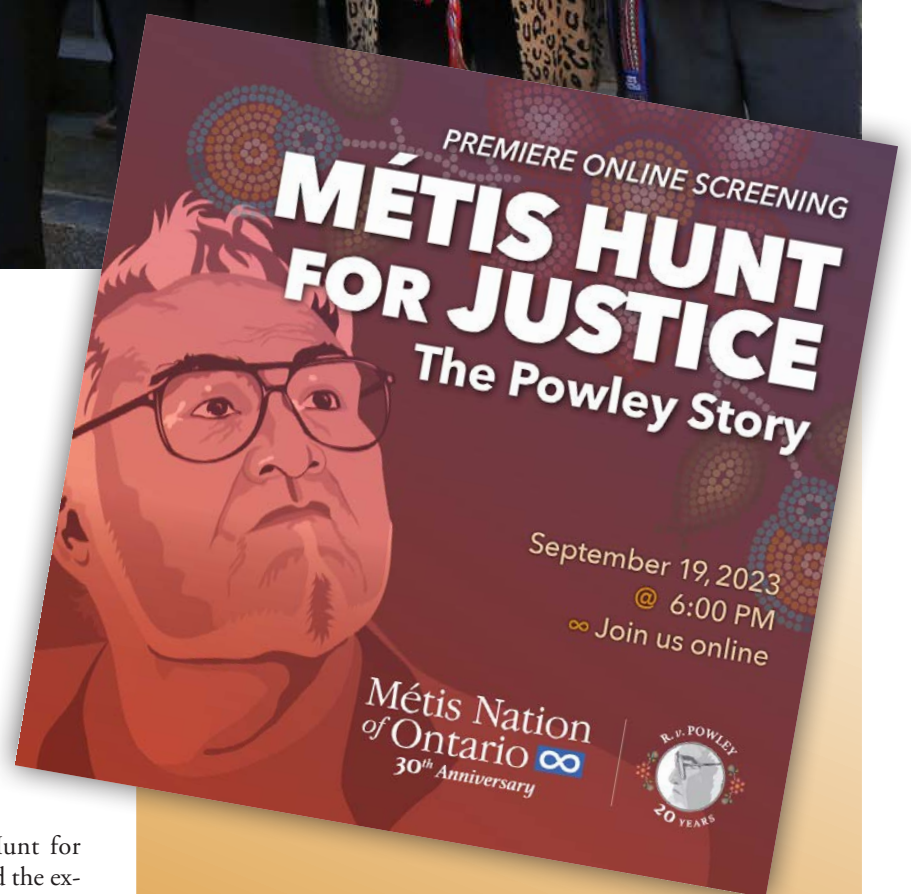


Throughout the Powley's decade-long "Hunt for Justice," a total of 14 judges resolutely affirmed the existence of a rights-bearing historic Métis community in the Sault Ste. Marie region of Ontario, underscoring the community's inherent right to hunt, as protected by Section 35 of the *Constitution Act, 1982*.

Hunt for Justice: The Powley Story offers an evocative portrayal of the Powley case, seamlessly blending archival footage and interviews with Steve Powley and other family members. Enhanced by research and illuminating commentary from trial judges, contemporary leaders, and esteemed experts involved in the case, the documentary provides the definitive account of this historic legal battle.

Also marking the 20th anniversary of *Powley*, the MNO hosted a Métis Rights Conference from November 5 to 8, 2023 at the Delta Hotel Waterfront in Sault Ste. Marie (see more on page 8).

The Powley Decision remains foundational for Métis rights and recognition across Canada by creating a legal framework for recognizing constitutionally-protected Métis rights. ∞



Métis Hunt for Justice: the Powley Story: This documentary tells the story of the struggle of Ontario Métis against marginalization and the denial of our very existence, and the immense impact of the Powley case.

30 years of success Highlights of 2023 at the Métis Nation of Ontario



Fall Early Learners Camp: In September, Métis early learners and their families enjoyed all that autumn in Ontario has to offer at the Canadian Ecological Center. The trees put on a show of orange at the MNO's Early Learners Fall Camp for the National Day of Truth and Reconciliation as Métis families came together. Campers participated in Orange Shirt Day activities and a reconciliation walk. To read the recap and see more images, visit: <https://bit.ly/FallCamp2023MNO>



BACK-2-SCHOOL: For the fourth year running, MNO distributed 1,000 Back to School Kits to support young Métis citizens from JK to Grade 6! Our Early Learning and Child Care team's program eases the burden for families and ensures Métis students have a great start to the school year. Each kit contained back to school essentials such as a lunch kit, stationary, and a gift card.



Youth Leadership Award: The MNO would like to offer its congratulations to Hayden Stenlund on receiving the 2023 MNO Youth Council's Leadership Award. Whether it's his work as a councillor on the Kenora Métis Council, learning his Michif language and even monitoring and protecting the waterways of his traditional territory, Hayden is a shining example of the work our young MNO citizens do to celebrate their culture and way of life. Congratulations Hayden and keep up the fantastic work!



Breaking Ground: The MNO celebrated a significant milestone in October with the launch of an affordable housing development project in Midland, ON. The project is a testament to the collaborative efforts of MNO and our dedicated partners. The event was graced by MNO and local leaders including PCMNO Chair Hank Rowlinson, Midland Mayor Bill Gordon, PCMNO Region 7 Councillor David Dusome, and Simcoe North Representative Leslie Stroud, who conveyed congratulations on behalf of MPP Jill Dunlop. More here: <https://bit.ly/3MbpvMC>

This year there was other exciting MNO housing news in the Greater Toronto Area (<https://bit.ly/3NDhLDZ>) and Sault Ste. Marie (<https://bit.ly/3RxtO70>) as well.



Community Outreach: This spring the MNO joined the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) for their 3rd Indigenous Conference Circle to provide an opportunity for OPSEU members to immerse themselves in the knowledge-sharing event about Métis experiences in Ontario. Read the story here: <https://bit.ly/OPSEUConference>



LOUIS RIEL DAY: A Louis Riel Day commemoration and flag-raising ceremony took place at Queen's Park in Toronto on November 16th! Delivering welcoming remarks on behalf of the MNO were President Margaret Froh, Senator Garry Laframboise, as well as Senator Suzanne Brunelle and Youth Representative Marissa Magneson from the Toronto and York Region Métis Council.

The event was attended by Her Honour Madame Edith Dumont, recently appointed Lieutenant Governor and a number of MPPs spoke including Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Indigenous Affairs Secretary Kevin Holand; Leader of the Opposition Marit Stiles and MPP Lucille Collard.

A class of grade 5 students from Parkdale Toronto School District also attended the flag-raising and were excited to receive a lesson in Métis history!



Above: **Riel Day flag-raising ceremony at Toronto City Hall** was graced by the presence of leadership from Toronto, including Mayor Olivia Chow, the province and the Toronto & York Region Métis Council.



Above: **In recognition of Riel Day, the MNO arranged the illumination of two iconic Canadian landmarks - the CN Tower and Niagara Falls on November 16th.**



Soirée in the Soo: The MNO hosted a Métis Rights Conference in November in Sault Ste. Marie. Guided by the theme "Looking Back, Moving Forward," the speakers reflected on the political history of the MNO, the progress of Métis Self-Government and explored next steps for securing Métis rights and recognition in Canada. The conference also featured cultural activities, a memorial feast, a vendors market and "The Soirée in the Soo" - a night of Métis-inspired cuisine and entertainment.



Crown-Métis Summit: In June, MNO leadership joined Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his Cabinet and other MNC governing members at the Crown-Métis Nation Summit. Great work was done on continuing to advance our shared priorities.



Baby Bundle Kits: This year's new and improved baby bundle kits were filled with amazing products for Métis parents! The MNO is currently working to re-stock our 100% free kits, but make sure to join the waitlist if eligible. The MNO thanks Melissa Buckton for sharing this lovely photo with us!

See our unboxing video here: <https://bit.ly/3RQAD4W>



WWII Métis Veterans: On May 26, 2023, at a Métis Veterans Legacy ceremony in Sudbury, a formal apology from Canada was presented in honour of the late Métis Veteran Melvin Ronald Rivers, and his surviving spouse Grace Rivers, for Melvin's sacrifices during World War II and the neglect experienced upon his return. More here: <https://bit.ly/43DaY2x>

Also in May, Métis veteran Wallace McLeod was similarly recognized in a ceremony in Oakville, ON. Read more here: <https://bit.ly/VeteransEventMcLeod>



Infinite Reach Orientation: The MNO's Infinite Reach program empowers upper year post-secondary Métis students to lead cultural initiatives on their campuses and make the transition to post-secondary smoother for new Métis students. This fall, a fresh cohort of Infinite Reach facilitators came to Ottawa for orientation. Workshops and discussions provided tools and knowledge to help facilitators foster a welcoming and inclusive environment for Métis students to help them better navigate post-secondary life.



The Great Rendezvous: Hundreds of visitors and historic reenactors from across North America gathered at Fort William Historical Park - Parc historique du Fort William in Thunder Bay to participate in a re-enactment of the Great Rendezvous of 1816. This July, the Rendezvous brought history to life by taking visitors back to the vibrant fur trade era through hands-on workshops, demonstrations, music, dancing and traditional hospitality. Local, regional and provincial MNO leadership were on hand to bring greetings and participate in the festivities.



PLEBISCITE and SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY: On Saturday, June 17, 2023, the Métis Nation of Ontario held a Special Assembly in Toronto, Ontario to follow through on the next steps related to the Registry Review process and the results of its province-wide Plebiscite in relation to the removal of MNO citizens with incomplete files from the MNO Registry. A total of 538 citizens registered and attended the Special Assembly. A total of 516 citizens voted on the Special Resolution during the Ballot Box Vote. Of those citizens who voted, a total 455 citizens voted "In Favour" of the Special Resolution. A total of 59 MNO citizens voted "Opposed." A total of 2 ballots were deemed "Spoiled." These results further reiterate the clear democratic will of MNO citizens provided through the Plebiscite.

For full details on the Special General Assembly visit the MNO website:



Two-Spirit LGBTQ+: The MNO would like to extend their congratulations to the MNO's Two-Spirit working group in their transformation into an interim council! Through this mechanism the interim council now has more tools to help continue the MNO's work to foster an inclusive and safe environment for all of our Two-Spirit+ MNO citizens!



MNO Women's Council: The MNO Women's Council (MNOWC) held their Annual General Meeting on August 17 in Ottawa. Attending leadership, included MNOWC President Suzanne Jackson and Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak President Melanie Omeniho. MNO President Froh provided greetings and opening remarks. Attendees reviewed policy, draft charters and community codes, and heard reports from regional reps and leadership. Marsii to our women leaders!



Women Honouring Women Award: A big congratulations to Métis Nation of Ontario citizen and President of the Temiskaming Métis Community Council Lorette McKnight, who was this year's Women Honouring Women Award recipient! More here: <https://bit.ly/3ZdEdlw>



Native Bee Monitoring Program: This summer the MNO Native Bee Monitoring Project generated a lot of buzz in our communities! In fact, due to the tremendous popularity of the project, supplies were quick to run out and some would-be apiarists missed out. So, the Thames Bluewater Métis Council flew into action to expand the initiative in their community. More at: <https://bit.ly/448TV9w>



Past MNO President Gary Lipinski Honoured: On June 6, 2023 former president of the MNO, Gary Lipinski, was among five accomplished Canadians receiving honorary degrees at Wilfrid Laurier University's 2023 spring convocation ceremonies. Lipinski retired in 2016 after more than two decades as an elected representative within the MNO, including two successful terms as MNO President. He left a legacy of advocacy that improved the quality of life of Ontario Métis children, youth, families, and communities. More here: <https://bit.ly/GaryLipinskiAward>



Adventures on Georgian Bay: In July, MNO President Margaret Froh joined Métis youth from across the province at the MNO's Canoe Experience Camp! Nine Métis youth paddled in the wake of their ancestors, savouring the splendor of Georgian Bay, connecting with Métis peers, and creating memories! Special thanks goes to Awenda Provincial Park -- which provided the camping space for the youth free of charge, and to Challenges Canada for their partnership in this incredible camp experience.

This is just a small portion of the incredible news, events, and initiatives that took place at MNO this year. We're eager to hear about what's happening in your region and community. Share your stories with us at CommOps@metisnation.org!

See You in the New Year!

Alo! I am Jiggy! Your guide to Métis Self-Government!

I hope you and your family had a Merry Christmas and I wish you a healthy and prosperous year ahead. May the spirit of the 'Métis joie de vivre' be with you all year long!

We've come a long way on our shared journey toward self-government and self-determination. The all-important Bill C-53 is now before Canadian Parliament.

YOU can help support Métis Self-Government by sending a letter to your local MP and Senator to support the passing of Bill C-53 (www.billc53.ca).

Once Bill C-53 is passed, you will see more of me on social media and at a location near you! This will be the start of a conversation on what OUR government and constitution will look like.

How exciting!

Soon, we will all roll up our sleeves and get in the canoe to build the nation we all want, and for the generations to come.

To give your comments, ideas or ask questions, you can e-mail the Self-Government team at Self.Government@metisnation.org

Métis Nation
of Ontario 
30th Anniversary



THE PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OF THE MNO

A HOLIDAY WISH
UN SOUHAIT DU TEMPS DES FÊTES

As we mark the Winter Solstice and approach the holiday season, the PCMNO wishes the best for you and your loved ones. May your homes be filled with light, love and laughter during this most joyful time of year.

We look forward to seeing you all in the New Year, and thank you for your many contributions towards the MNO in 2023. Thank you and marsii.

Métis Nation
of Ontario 
30th Anniversary

HAPPY NEW YEAR
BONNE ANNÉE


As we head into the new year, we are reminded of the many accomplishments of 2023 – none of which would have been possible without the hard work of our citizens, staff, councils and leadership.

Working together, we know there are great things on the horizon for 2024.

We have celebrated two historic anniversaries this year: the 30th anniversary of the Métis Nation of Ontario and the 20th anniversary of the Powley Decision.

Both accomplishments have set us on the path to realize true Métis self-government. Together, we will continue this journey, working to advance the rights and interest of all Métis in Ontario.

On behalf of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario,
Happy New Year!

Métis Nation
of Ontario 
30th Anniversary

MÉTIS NATION OF ONTARIO

ONLINE CITIZENSHIP REGISTRATION

NOW AVAILABLE



- ∞ APPLY FOR MNO CITIZENSHIP
- ∞ APPLY FOR A MNO HARVESTER CERTIFICATE
- ∞ UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

metisnation.org/registry


Learn about all the Métis Nation of Ontario programs and services available to you and your family:

1-800-263-4889 ext.7 (toll-free)

ContactUs@metisnation.org

PCMNO RECAPS

Recap reports of all meetings of the Provisional Council of the Métis Nation of Ontario (PCMNO) can be viewed on the MNO website



ANNUAL REPORT



ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT CALCULATOR

Do you know the impact your lifestyle has on the environment in your community? Calculate your ecological footprint and explore sustainable solutions you can use to minimize your eco impact.



MÉTIS VOYAGEUR DEVELOPMENT FUND

Please note that due to high demand from Métis entrepreneurs, we are fully committed on capital. As such, the Métis Voyageur Development Fund is not currently accepting new applications. If you would like us to contact you when funding does become available, please send an email to info@mddf.ca Thank you and we will be in touch!

24hr mental health & addictions

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